

### **Fact or Myth?**

Snakes have been known to chase people.



### **Fact or Myth?**

A snake must coil before it can strike.



Copperhead

### **Fact or Myth?**

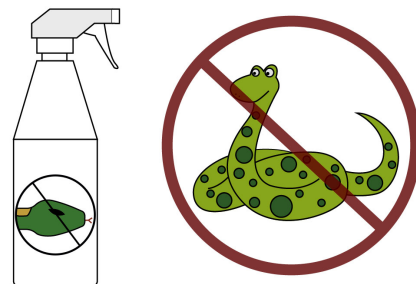
Rattlesnakes always add one rattle a year.



Timber Rattlesnake tail

### **Fact or Myth?**

Sprinkling sulfur or other store bought chemicals will keep snakes out of your yard.



**MYTH!**

Snakes can bite or strike from any position. Coiling does increase the distance that a snake can strike but seeing a coiled snake doesn't mean it's ready to strike. Snakes are often coiled up because it's a safer body position. Being stretched out leaves them more vulnerable to predators.

**MYTH!**

There are many old stories about being chased by snakes. But scientists who study reptiles don't have this experience—they find that snakes are always trying to **escape**. A snake has nothing to gain by chasing a person. It obviously cannot eat a person and would actually be putting itself in more danger.

**MYTH!**

There is no evidence to suggest that these chemicals deter snakes. However, if you remove snake habitat and food from your yard, they won't be willing to stay. Remove brush piles, logs, and leaf litter; keep bushes trimmed back and grass cut short. Keep mice out of stored birdseed or grain.

**MYTH!**

A rattlesnake adds one rattle every time it sheds its skin. Snakes may shed several times in the course of a year, each time adding a new rattle. Also, sometimes rattles may break off. Counting rattles usually isn't an accurate way to guess age.

### **Fact or Myth?**

All watersnakes are venomous.



Northern Watersnake

### **Fact or Myth?**

Kingsnakes will eat other snakes.



Eastern Kingsnake

### **Fact or Myth?**

Venomous snakes will breed with non-venomous snakes to create new dangerous snakes.



### **Fact or Myth?**

Some snakes will play dead when frightened.



Eastern Hognose Snake

## **FACT!**

Eastern kingsnakes are known to eat rodents, frogs, lizards, small turtles, and snakes; including venomous species like rattlesnakes and copperheads. There are actually quite a few species of snakes that will eat other snakes.

## **MYTH!**

Cottonmouths are the only venomous semi-aquatic snake in NC. All true water snakes (4 species in NC) and other aquatic snake species are non-venomous.



Cottonmouth

## **FACT!**

Hognose snakes are known for their dramatic displays when frightened. They will hiss loudly and spread their neck like cobras. They rarely bite but may strike repeatedly. If the threat continues, they will feign death by opening its mouth, rolling on its back, and writhing around. If turned onto its belly, it will flip over again onto its back.

## **MYTH!**

Although it is sometimes possible for similar species to interbreed, such events are **extremely** rare. The young resulting from such an event are usually unable to breed. There is no documented account of a venomous snake species interbreeding with a non-venomous species.



## Fact or Myth?

In the U. S., you are more likely to be struck by lightning than to die from a snakebite.



Timber Rattlesnake

## Fact or Myth?

I have a pet snake that I can't keep any more; it will be fine to let it go in a natural place.



## Fact or Myth?

Snakes are slimy.



Eastern Garter Snake skin

## Fact or Myth?

Snakes can hypnotize birds and other prey.



## **MYTH!**

Never release ANY pet into the wild. It's not good for the animal or our environment. Instead, try returning it to the pet store, finding a new pet owner, or contact your local wildlife agency, animal control, or reptile rescue group. For more info:

<http://separc.org/products/#/unwanted-pets/>

## **FACT!**

Snakes are shy animals that prefer to be left alone. The majority of snakebites occur when a person tries to handle or harm a snake. A bite can be easily avoided if we learn to keep a respectful distance, watch where we step and put our hands while outdoors, and learn to identify local snakes.

\*Annual fatality data is available from NOAA (lightning strikes) and the CDC (snakebites)

## **MYTH!**

Snakes have no eyelids and they never blink but they don't have any type of hypnotic powers. Some species may move their head from side to side to gain depth perception while hunting. Maybe that is where this myth got started.

## **MYTH!**

Snakeskin is covered in scales from the same material as our fingernails. Some snakes have very smooth, shiny skin that could look slimy but they don't actually produce slime.